

REFERENCE TO EARLIER FILED APPLICATIONS

The present application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Serial No. 09/599,921, filed June 22, 2000, which is a continuation of PCT application Serial No. US 97/24132, filed December 30, 1997 and designating the United States, both of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

In the Claims

Please cancel claims 1-23 and 26-27 without prejudice.

Please add new claims 28-43 as follows:

28. (New) The method of claim 24 wherein the rolling compound further comprises a sugar or polyol sweetener.

29. (New) The method of claim 24 wherein the rolling compound further comprises one or more of mannitol, sorbitol, sucrose, starch, calcium carbonate and talc.

30. (New) The method of claim 28 wherein the sugar is selected from the group consisting of sucrose, dextrose, fructose, maltodextrins and mixtures thereof.

31. (New) The method of claim 28 wherein the polyol is selected from the group consisting of sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, maltitol, lactitol, hydrogenated isomaltulose, hydrogenated starch hydrolyzates and mixtures thereof.

32. (New) The method of claim 24 wherein the antimicrobial agent is selected from the group consisting of 1) 2,4,4-trichloro-2-hydroxydiphenyl ether, 2) cetylpyridinium chloride, 3) hexylresorcinol, 4) chlorhexidine digluconate and mixtures thereof.

33. (New) The method of claim 24 wherein a high-potency sweetener selected from the group consisting of aspartame, alitame, salts of acesulfame, cyclamate and its salts, saccharin and its salts, thaumatin, monellin, dihydrochalcones and combinations thereof is mixed in the rolling compound with the antimicrobial agent.

34. (New) The method of claim 24 wherein the amount of antimicrobial agent added to the rolling compound is about 0.05% to about 10% of the rolling compound.

35. (New) The method of claim 24 wherein the amount of antimicrobial agent added to the rolling compound is about 5 ppm to about 1000 ppm of the chewing gum product.

36. (New) The method of claim 25 wherein the coating further comprises a sugar or polyol sweetener.

37. (New) The method of claim 25 wherein the coating further comprises one or more of dextrose, maltose, palatinose, xylitol, lactitol and hydrogenated isomaltulose.

38. (New) The method of claim 36 wherein the sugar is selected from the group consisting of sucrose, dextrose, fructose, maltodextrins and mixtures thereof.

39. (New) The method of claim 36 wherein the polyol is selected from the group consisting of sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, maltitol, lactitol, hydrogenated isomaltulose, hydrogenated starch hydrolyzates and mixtures thereof.

40. (New) The method of claim 25 wherein the antimicrobial agent is selected from the group consisting of 1) 2,4,4-trichloro-2-hydroxydiphenyl ether, 2) cetylpyridinium chloride, 3) hexylresorcinol, 4) chlorhexidine digluconate and mixtures thereof.

41. (New) The method of claim 25 wherein a high-potency sweetener selected from the group consisting of aspartame, alitame, salts of acesulfame, cyclamate and its salts, saccharin and its salts, thaumatin, monellin, dihydrochalcones and combinations thereof is mixed in the coating with the antimicrobial agent.

42. (New) The method of claim 25 wherein the amount of antimicrobial agent added to the coating is about 0.01% to about 2.5% of the coating.

43. (New) The method of claim 25 wherein the amount of antimicrobial agent added to the coating is about 50 ppm to about 10,000 ppm of the chewing gum product.